

October 15, 2002

Secretary Tommy G. Thompson
Office of the Secretary
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Julie Louise Gerberding, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Department of Health and Human Services
1600 Clifton Road, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Secretary Thompson and Dr. Gerberding:

We write to you as Members of Congress concerned about our constituents' health. Specifically, we respectfully request that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) release the California-specific data from their 1999 "Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals." As you know, the report is a "snapshot" of the American public's exposure to 27 common pollutants in the environment, such as lead, mercury, and cotinine (a byproduct of secondhand smoke).

Since California is the only state included in this report with a statistically significant sample, we request that California biomonitoring data be released. This request requires no commitment of funds, or expansion of state programs. It serves only to enhance the science with which state health agencies operate.

In December 2002, when the CDC's next report is released, the California sample will be even more relevant as it provides comparative data to the 1999 report. At present, the California Department of Health Services is engaged in a biomonitoring planning project to compete for future CDC grants. This data would help our state agencies make the most efficient use of biomonitoring resources by directing biomonitoring research and expenditure. In addition, this data will allow us to take appropriate action to reduce human exposure to chemicals that pose a serious risk to our most vulnerable populations, including infants, children, and pregnant women.

We extend our strongest support for California Senate Joint Resolution 49 and join members of the California State Senate, the California State Assembly, and California public health interests in urging the CDC to release these findings.

Thank you for your leadership in the effort to reduce exposure to chemicals that threaten human health. We look forward to working with you on this and other important public health issues.

Sincerely,

Rep. Barbara Lee
Rep. Nancy Pelosi
Rep. Howard Berman
Rep. Lois Capps

Rep. Anna Eshoo
Rep. Sam Farr
Rep. Bob Filner
Rep. Michael Honda
Rep. Robert Matsui
Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald
Rep. George Miller
Rep. Grace Napolitano
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard
Rep. Adam Schiff
Rep. Brad Sherman
Rep. Hilda Solis
Rep. Pete Stark
Rep. Maxine Waters
Rep. Diane Watson
Rep. Henry Waxman
Rep. Lynn Woolsey